



March 12, 2024

Chairman Billinger, and Members of the Senate Ways & Means committee,

Thank you for your consideration of SB529. This letter is in support of The Dwayne Peaslee Technical Training Center's request for a permanent source of funding to continue to serve the businesses in Douglas County, providing the technical skills needed to sustain their businesses, as well as attracting new jobs.

For decades Lawrence and Douglas county lacked access to local technical skills training. In 2013 Lawrence lost a major manufacturer who would have invested \$85 million in a new facility and would have brought over one hundred jobs, with an average pay of \$44,000.00.

As the day approached to sign the deal, the company wanted to know about our technical training in Douglas county. We had none, and the company withdrew their plans to come here.

The Lawrence Chamber, the City and County, the USD 497, Our Economic Development Corporation, and many local businesses and private citizens came together to invest over \$2 million to build what is now referred to as Peaslee Tech, to finally address this much needed training.

For long term sustainability it is crucial that Peaslee Tech has a permanent funding source using a countywide special district. We are confident that this .05 mill levy will pass as our business community now has a source for well-trained employees and our citizens have local access to technical training and well-paying jobs.

Sincerely,

Shirley Martin-Smith
Chair of the Board – Peaslee Technical
Adecco Franchisee - Kansas